

Content-based English: Around the World (beginner book)

Teacher's Guide

John Spiri, globalstoriespress@gmail.com

Mistake Notification

Please note that the items on page 20 for "Koreans tend to..." are mistaken. These are the items for Denmark and don't match Korea. I write the items below on the board for Korea. Koreans tend to:

1. be punctual.
2. express emotions.
3. be impatient.
4. have beautiful skin.
5. wear makeup, including men.
6. be superstitious.
7. speak loudly in public.

Listening Transcripts

The 8 sentences (see following pages) for the 8 pictures in each chapter are an integral aspect of the textbook. Learners listen to them (available on CD and online) while they look at the corresponding pictures, and write each sentence. This teacher's guide provides information about this dictation activity along with several variations on the standard approach.

See the website for audio downloads and more information: <http://www.globalstoriespress.com/>

Below is a quick synopsis of a typical class:

1. Review 8 dictation sentences from previous week by
 - a) shadow talking (I say and students repeat or partners read/repeat)
 - b) find the mistakes (I say some fun, silly mistakes, students catch mistakes)
 - c) students recite 2-8 sentences with partner (listening partner gives hints)
 - d) if time will allow, individuals recite sentence(s) to the entire class
2. Do vocabulary for new dictation (top of vocab page, first page of chapters)
3. Brainstorm vocabulary for the 8 culture pictures (2nd page of every chapter)
4. Partners make sentences about the pictures, what they see, what's happening, what they imagine the sentence might be about, etc.
5. Dictation
 - a) I read each sentence once; they listen and mark how well they understood.
 - b) I read each sentence 3 times, students do dictation.
 - c) partners help each other, checking and finishing sentences as best they can
 - d) a student reads her sentence, I write on board and we correct it together
6. Do vocabulary for reading (bottom of vocabulary page)
7. Read the famous person article, either together or individually.
8. They answer questions, we check, then they do the short discussion question.
9. Do the geography activity (under the reading, with the map)
 - a) go over the surrounding countries (write on board or students check maps)
 - b) read the sentence and find the location on the country map
 - c) find that country on a world map (back of text)
 - d) do gap activity about population density, life expectancy (back of book)
10. If time allows, students write most impressive facts about famous people and places for that country (back of text)

Dictation

For the main listening activity, students do dictation. I like to apply elements of dictogloss/ grammar dictation. For a thorough explanation of the dictogloss method, see “Grammar Dictation” by Ruth Wajnryb (Oxford Resource Books for Teachers series). Dictogloss is a kind of cooperative learning where students go through a series of steps to write down and understand what they have heard. Specific instructions follow.

Ask students to listen to the sentences (either play the audio or teacher read the sentences) the first time without writing anything. Students then reflect and do the “First Listening” activity by checking how well they think they understood the sentences. Play the audio or read the narrative a second, third, and perhaps fourth time (the first time, as explained above, they just listen), instructing students to write the narrative (take dictation). The object is not necessarily for students to write the narratives word for word, but rather be challenged, and perhaps only write half or three-quarters of the sentences. Make it clear to students that they won’t be able to write everything. Of course the amount each student writes will vary, but if most students can write the entire narrative, it is being spoken too slowly, and/or it is too easy. If reading (instead of playing the CD), adjust your speed to match the proficiency of students. On the other hand, students should be able to at least write a few key words from each sentence. If not, you may want to play or read the narrative more than once, but it’s recommended to only say the sentences three or four times total. Avoid replaying or restating the sentences until students write them entirely.

Next, students meet with a partner and compare what they have written. This important step in the process should be made clear to students. Instruct pairs of students to finish incomplete sentences checking cooperatively and, if there is a discrepancy between a word or word form between two students, instruct students to discuss why and figure out the correct word or form. At this point, students should be encouraged, first and foremost, to write good sentences that approximate the meaning of the dictation sentences.

When students are ready, choose students to write sentences on the board (or ask students to read sentences while you write them as spoken on board). Make sure students don’t resort to checking the correct answer if you have provided them the transcripts for every chapter--it’s more instructive to have sentences written on the board with some errors. Write the student sentences even if they are incorrect or vary from the original narrative sentences. Tell the class it’s fine if a sentence is correct and/or understandable even though it might vary from the original.

In the end, the sentences that were narrated should be provided to the students. This can be done while correcting sentences on the board. Students should eventually make sure that their narrative sentences are written correctly. It’s important that students have the sentences written correctly, as dictated, because they will practice the narrative later.

Below are some variations on the standard dictogloss method that the teacher can use at her or his discretion.

1. **Dictation Negotiation** (variation on the standard dictation method)

1) Students may sit with a partner with desks face to face rather than side by side. This encourages discussion. Read or play a single sentence from the narrative at natural, or close to natural, speed. Give students one to three minutes to discuss what they think they heard. Allow no writing for

this discussion period.

Teacher may want to take time to coach students on collaborative learning skills. Encouraging students to speak in the target language, and providing them with useful request words is helpful (“Once more please,” “It’s your turn,” etc.). In this way the process of arriving at a written sentence is more important than the actual sentence. Student’s memories are challenged as well as their analytical skills for deciding on a grammatically correct sentence.

Have one partner of each pair write the sentence. Students can decide who writes, but taking turns is best. Encourage good sentences even if what they write is somewhat different from the dictated sentence. Continue this process for each sentence of the narrative. Have sentences written on the board.

2. Student-Controlled Dictation (2nd variation on standard method)

This variation encourages student autonomy; the student negotiation and text re-creation aspects of dictogloss, however, are lost.

Explain that you the teacher will read a narrative as a tape recorder would, complete with stop, rewind and fast-forward buttons. Emphasize that each student is responsible for controlling the teacher by telling her/him to “STOP, go back to...”. Proceed to read the sentences at natural speed (in this case, not slowing your normal speaking speed); if no student says “stop” do not stop even if it’s clear that students are unable to write it all. Students are responsible to say, “STOP,” when they can’t keep up, and “Go back to (the last word or phrase they have written).” Encourage students to be persistent; they can “rewind” the teacher as many times as necessary.

This works best with the rule that a student can only say “stop, go back to...” one time. Without this rule, the same few students--invariably the highest level students--will completely control the pace. The lower level students might be lost, but will be too shy to speak. After each member of the class has controlled the teacher once, then anyone can again control one time, until all have taken a turn. Once the class comprehends that everyone can and should control the teacher, and you get nearly full participation, this rule need not be followed absolutely.

By the end each student should have written exactly or close to exactly the original sentence. There is, however, a saturation point where lower level students are embarrassed and perhaps simply unable to comprehend and write what’s being spoken. For that reason partner conferencing (step three above under standard dictation) can be done for this variation as well. This dictation variation is fun for students to control the teacher; it encourages autonomy and careful attending to every word.

3. Sentence Ordering (3rd Variation on Standard dictation method)

An option is to, while using the standard method, scramble the order of the sentences (in which case teacher must read the sentences). At the end, students can then decide the correct order of the narrative.

4. Student Dictators (4th variation)

Put students in groups of four. Each of the four students needs to be assigned one sentence (students may be provided a small paper with a sentence).

Thus, student one studies and then reads sentence 1 aloud for partners to write; student two studies and reads sentence 2; and then student three reads sentences 3, etc. The non-readers listen

and write the sentences.

5. **Relay Dictation** (5th variation)

Overview: Print the sentences and tape to the walls of the classroom. Students go to a sentence, memorize as much as they can, then return to teach their partner the sentence. They can take as many trips as necessary to remember the sentence.

Detailed instructions:

1. Partner B waits in his/her seat while Partner A goes to a sentence that is taped to a wall or blackboard.
2. Partner A reads the sentence and memorizes as much as possible.
3. Partner A returns to seat and says whatever s/he can remember to his/her partner (who listens and takes dictation).
4. Partner A goes back to the sentence as many times as necessary and eventually does this for half of the sentences.
5. When dictation for half of the sentences is completed, Partner B goes to a sentence, reads it, memorizes it, then returns to his/her seat to teach partner.
6. Thus, each student will teach half of the sentences and take dictation for the other half of the sentences.
7. Individual students are called to write sentences on the board.

Review Activities

I always begin a subsequent class by reviewing and practicing the sentences that students wrote in the previous class. Below are a series of activities that will help students practice.

Shadowing

One option is to simply read the sentences and have students shadow talk (repeat). Conversely, students can be coached on how to properly read the narrative and read to a partner who shadow talks. The reading partner should slow the pace down and/or speak in smaller chunks if their partner is having trouble repeating or understanding; likewise, if the shadowing partner is repeating and understanding with great ease, the reading partner should increase the speed and/or speak in larger chunks.

Find the Differences (see last transcripts (with mistakes) starting on p. 3 of this guide)

This is a listening activity for which students listen to the narrative sentences which they wrote and checked with partners. One way to do this activity is to read the sentences to the whole class. I like to have everyone stand; when someone catches a mistake, or then says the original (correct) word, they can sit down. Another way to do it is to copy and hand out the transcripts of the sentences with mistakes and have one partner read the mistake sentence, and the other partner try to catch the mistakes and say the correct word. Students should be coached on how to read the mistake sentences; the reader should not identify the error by slowing down or signaling, but read each sentence naturally. Whenever the listener hears something strange, she says "STOP" and each partner circles the discrepancy. It's the listener's responsibility to find the errors, not the reader's.

Questioning

With partner, students take turns making questions for each dictation sentence while their partner answers (without reading). For example, questions for the first four Kenya sentences could be:

1. What flower is grown in Kenya? How is the weather in Kenya?
2. Which large animals are found in Kenya?
3. What might a man's family pay his wife's family? Why? (While the sentence doesn't state why, I will have informed them that the payment is made when couples get married.)
4. What is an ingredient of ugali?

Practice using Pictures

One partner tells the narrative looking at the pictures only (no reading). The listening partner can be reading the full narrative and providing assistance as needed by giving hints, asking questions and telling missing information that the speaker forgets. Depending on the level of students, certain skills can be isolated and practiced: Pronunciation and intonation; speaking volume; eye contact; affectation, etc. Use the good speaker / good listener checklist (photocopiable handout), or supplement with your own exercises (pronunciation, etc.).

Storytelling

Without intentionally try to memorize, students have probably learned one or more of the sentences. You can ask for a volunteer to say a sentence, one picture at a time. Conversely, you can ask a student to say it, or ask two or three partners to recite it together or help each other as they stand and say it for the class to hear. The idea is to have students say the main idea of the sentence without reading. If they know students will be expected to do this they tend to practice the sentences a little more seriously. Having students stand and say sentences is like having them give mini-presentations.